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051230Z Mar 02

CONFIDENTIAL PTQ4658

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ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	DOTE-00	DS-00
	EAP-00	EB-00	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	VC-00	TEDE-00	INR-00
	VCE-00	NSAE-00	SSO-00	SS-00	EPAE-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02
	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/002W				

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1096
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000572

SIPDIS

FOR AF, PDAS BELLAMY; ALSO FOR AF/S

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/23/03

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: MORE ON TSVANGIRAI'S ALLEGED "PLOT" TO
"ELIMINATE" MUGABE

REF: A) HARARE 411 B) HARARE 501

CLASSIFIED BY DCM REWHITEHEAD DUE TO 1.5 (B) AND (D).

1. (SBU) SUMMARY. THE GOZ FIRED ANOTHER OFF-TARGET
SALVO IN ITS CONTINUING ATTEMPT TO DISCREDIT MDC
PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE MORGAN TSVANGIRAI THROUGH
ACCUSATIONS THAT HE APPROACHED THE CANADIAN DICKENS AND
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MADSON LOBBYING FIRM, HEADED BY ONE ARI BEN MENASHE, TO
ARRANGE THE "ASSASSINATION" OF PRESIDENT MUGABE (REFS A
AND B). A MARCH 3 ZBC TELEVISION BROADCAST AGAIN SHOWED
FILM CLIPS OF TSVANGIRAI TALKING WITH BEN MENASHE AND
OTHER UNIDENTIFIED OBSERVERS. A SECOND SEGMENT OF THE
ZBC PROGRAM FEATURED AIR FORCE COMMANDER PERENCE SHIRI
DESCRIBING A SECOND MEETING WITH MDC MPS JOB SIKHALA AND
TAFADZWA MUSEKIWA, WHOM SHIRI CLAIMED HAD OFFERED HIM A
HEFTY FEE TO ASSIST THE MDC WITH A SMOOTH TRANSITION TO
POWER AFTER THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS. THE ENTIRE ZBC
PROGRAM WAS AMATEURISH TO THE EXTREME AND OFFERED LITTLE
CONVINCING EVIDENCE TO BUTTRESS THE GOZ'S CASE (OR
ELECTORAL STRENGTH). ADDITIONAL INFORMATION GLEANED
FROM CANADIAN DIPLOMATS SHEDS LIGHT ON TSVANGIRAI'S
MOTIVE FOR MEETING BEN MENASHE AND COMPANY, BUT BRINGS
INTO QUESTION HIS JUDGMENT IN THIS AFFAIR. END SUMMARY.

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2. (U) THE MUCH ANTICIPATED TELEVISION EXPOSE ON MORGAN
TSVANGIRAI'S ALLEGED PLOT TO ASSASSINATE PRESIDENT

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MUGABE TURNED OUT TO BE MUCH ADO ABOUT LITTLE. THE
PROGRAM OPENED WITH A REBROADCAST OF THE GRAINY AND
OFTEN INAUDIBLE FILM CLIPS OF TSVANGIRAI, ARI BEN
MENASHE, BEN MENASHE'S CONSULTING COHORT, AND TWO OTHER
INDIVIDUALS WHO COULD NOT BE CLEARLY IDENTIFIED IN THE
TAPE. AN UNCONVINCING SPLICE JOB DID LITTLE TO ENHANCE
THE CREDIBILITY OF THE TAPE, IN WHICH TSVANGIRAI --
FOLLOWING CONSIDERABLE PROMPTING AND POSSIBLY SPLICED
OUT OF CONTEXT -- REFERS TO THE "ELIMINATION" OF MUGABE
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AND A THREE-PHASE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD THAT INCLUDES
DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS.

3. THE EXPOSE NEXT FEATURED CLIPS OF TSVANGIRAI DENYING
INVOLVEMENT IN ANY PLOT, THEN BEN MENASHE (AN OLD MUGABE
ACQUAINTANCE WHO FORMERLY HAD A BUSINESS ARRANGEMENT
WITH SHIRI) CALLING TSVANGIRAI A LIAR AND PIOUSLY
INTONING THAT HE HAD BEEN FORCED TO DO THE RIGHT THING
AND EXPOSE THE PLOT. AN AUSTRALIAN INVESTIGATIVE
FILMMAKER WHO HAD PRODUCED AN HOUR-LONG TELEVISION
SEGMENT OUT OF THE TAPE, LARGELY DEPENDING ON VOICE OVER
TECHNIQUES, DEFENDED HIS ROLE. THE ZBC BROADCAST THEN
RETURNED TO THE NEWS ANNOUNCER, WHO OPENLY GLOATED OVER
TSVANGIRAI'S PLIGHT. AIR FORCE COMMANDER SHIRI WAS NEXT

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IN LINE. FOLLOWING A TELEVISED PAN OF HIS FLEET OF
PLASTIC MODEL AIRPLANES, A CAMERA SHY SHIRI DESCRIBED
HOW MDC MPS SIKHALA AND MUSEKIWA HAD OFFERED HIM A 10

MILLION ZIMBABWEAN DOLLAR FEE TO HELP THE MDC ENGINEER A SMOOTH TRANSFER OF POWER FOLLOWING THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS. AS PROOF, SHIRI PLAYED A TAPE HE HAD MADE OF THE MEETING. THE RECORDING WAS SO INAUDIBLE THAT AT MOST TIMES IT WAS DIFFICULT TO ASCERTAIN WHAT LANGUAGE THEY PARTICIPANTS WERE SPEAKING, LET ALONE WHAT THEY WERE SAYING.

A COMIC FARCE

14. (C) THE ENTIRE BROADCAST CAME ACROSS AS FARCICAL. IT BEGAN TWENTY MINUTES LATE AND WAS INTERRUPTED BY A LONG PERIOD OF VIDEO MUSIC CLIPS BEFORE THE SHIRI
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SEGMENT BEGAN, PROMPTING ONE TO SPECULATE THAT SOMEONE IN ZBC HAD SECOND THOUGHTS ON THE WISDOM OF EVEN AIRING THE PROGRAM. THE TSVANGIRAI/BEN MENASHE SEGMENT INDICATED THAT TSVANGIRAI DID IN SOME CONTEXT USE THE WORDS "ELIMINATE" AND "MUGABE" IN PROXIMITY, BUT WITH NO CLEAR REFERENCE TO WHETHER THIS WAS POLITICAL IN NATURE, OR OTHERWISE. UNLIKE MANY OF HIS GOZ COLLEAGUES, SHIRI IS NOT PARTICULARLY ADEPT AT PUBLICLY TWISTING THE TRUTH AND CAME ACROSS AS MENDACIOUS AND ILL AT EASE. WERE THE SUBJECT MATTER AND THE STAKES NOT SO SERIOUS, THE ENTIRE AMATEURISH PRODUCTION WOULD HAVE BEEN GENUINELY COMICAL FARE.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

15. (C) CANADIAN DCM RONALD WILLSON PROVIDED THE DCM WITH BACKGROUND ON THE BEN MENASHE MEETING THAT SHEDS LIGHT ON HOW TSVANGIRAI HAD BEEN DUPED INTO THE UNFORTUNATE ENCOUNTER IN THE FIRST PLACE. WILSON SAID THAT MDC SECRETARY GENERAL WELSHMAN NCUBE HAD CONFIDED TO HIM THAT THE TWO UNIDENTIFIED MEN IN THE TAPE HAD

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INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	INL-00	DODE-00	DOTE-00
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	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/002W				

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1097
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 HARARE 000572

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BEEN INTRODUCED TO TSVANGIRAI PRIOR TO THE MEETING AS, RESPECTIVELY, THE DEPUTY DIRECTORS OF THE CIA AND NSA. ACCORDING TO NCUBE, TSVANGIRAI HAD TAKEN THE CLAIMS OF THE TWO IMPERSONATORS AT FACE VALUE. THE CANADIANS ALSO INFORMED US THAT A SENIOR CIO OFFICIAL TRAVELED TO MONTREAL AT THE TIME OF THE MONTREAL MEETING. STATE SECURITY MINISTER GOCHE ALSO TRAVELED TO MONTREAL IN FEBRUARY JUST PRIOR TO THE FIRST AUSTRALIAN AIRING OF
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THE VIDEO.

COMMENT

16. (C) UNLESS MUGABE AND HIS BACKERS HAVE MORE COMPELLING EVIDENCE THAN THAT PRESENTED IN THE BROADCAST, IT IS DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE THAT TSVANGIRAI AND HIS ASSOCIATE ARE IN MUCH DANGER OF BEING CONVICTED IN AN IMPARTIAL COURT OF LAW. WE OBVIOUSLY DO NOT DISCOUNT THE ABILITY OF THE GOZ TO STRING OUT THE CASE AND HARASS TSVANGIRAI AT THE TIME OF ITS OWN CHOOSING. THE MONTY-PYTHONESQUE NATURE OF THE ZBC BROADCAST OFFERS LITTLE TO CONVINCE THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY THAT THE ENTIRE AFFAIR IS MORE THAN JUST ANOTHER ITEM PULLED OUT OF THE GOZ'S BAG OF DIRTY TRICKS. IN TERMS OF ELECTIONS, WE THINK THAT THE ENTIRE AFFAIR IS A NON-

EVENT. THOSE INCLINED TO BELIEVE THE TAPE PROBABLY WILL
DO SO, AND THOSE NOT SO INCLINED WILL NOT. WE NOTE,
HOWEVER, THAT IN TERMS OF GOOD JUDGMENT AND ADEQUATE
STAFF WORK, THE MONTREAL MEETING WAS NOT MORGAN
TSVANGIRAI'S FINEST HOUR.

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